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ABSTRACT

In order to discover whether significant relationships exist between factors of self-concept and parent attitude and the reading level recommended for students evaluated by a reading clinic, the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale was administered to 60 children, while the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale and Maryland Parent Attitude Survey were administered to their mothers. Analysis of results showed only two statistically significant relationships, both indicating that family relationships and self-concept enter the picture of reading disability. Results led the authors to question seriously the usefulness of these instruments in reading clinics. (JM)

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The Relationship of Scores on Three Personality Assessment Instruments to Reading Levels

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An investigation was made of the possible relationship of scores on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale and Maryland Parent Attitude Survey to the levels on which children read. The Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale was administered to sixty children who had been referred to the University of Georgia Reading Clinic and the other two instruments were administered to their mothers. Out of a great number of possible relationships only two were found to be significant. The results led the authors to seriously question the usefulness of these instruments in reading clinics.

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Those who are knowledgeable about the diagnosis of reading problems are generally convinced that in a large number of cases family relationships and the child's self concepts enter into the picture of reading difficulties. Hughes (1967), Padelford (1970) and Kerensky (1966) have all found a positive relationship between self concept and academic achievement, albeit in most cases the relation was low. Since many reading clinics do not have the services of sociologists or psychologists for extended diagnosis and treatment, the search continues for instruments that reading clinicians can administer and interpret and that will provide useful information

about family relationships and self concept.

Three instruments that appear to fit these criteria are the

1. Maryland Parent Attitude Survey (1966) which has considerable content and face validity and reported reliabilities ranging from .622 to .843.
2. Tennessee Self Concept Scale is a widely used self concept instrument and Bentler (1972a) reports validity correlates from .50 to .70 and retest reliabilities in the high .80's.
3. Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale is reported by Bentler (1972b) to have validity correlates of .40 to the mid .60's, internal consistency ranges from .78 to .93 and retest reliabilities from .71 to .77.

The central question of this study was whether there were significant relationships between factors of self concept or parent attitudes and the recommended reading level of students who were diagnosed by a reading clinic.

Subjects for this study were 60 children and their mothers. The students ranged from grade three to grade seven and were children who had been referred to the University of Georgia Reading Clinic for diagnosis and recommended treatment of their reading problems. These children and their mothers were from all parts of Georgia and represented all economic and cultural levels.

The Tennessee Self Concept Scale and the Maryland Parent Attitude Survey were administered to the mothers and the Piers-Harris Children's

Self Concept Scale was administered to the children. All instruments were administered by advanced graduate students in reading education who had been taught to administer the instruments and who were directly supervised by the reading clinic personnel.

The subjects came to the Clinic over a two quarter period and no more than four sets of children and their mothers were examined on any one day.

The recommended reading level was arrived at by a team of those who administered the reading tests and the clinic staff. In setting this recommended reading level these personnel considered the child's scores on the University of Georgia Reading Clinic's Informal Reading Inventory, the Spache Diagnostic Reading Scales and the Gray Oral Reading Test. In order to have as little contamination as possible the three instruments measuring self concept and family relations were not scored until after the recommended reading level had been determined.

One further question was examined concerning the subjects of this study. That question was whether these the subjects in this study were obviously deviant from the norm within the areas of intelligence or self concept.

A z test was used to determine the differences between the means of the population used in this study and the means reported for the populations used in standardizing the WISC, Tennessee Self Concept Scale, and the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale. The following

z test, (Downie and Heath, 1959, pp. 132-133), was used: $z = \frac{D_{\bar{x}}}{S_{D_{\bar{x}}}}$ where $D_{\bar{x}}$ = the difference between the two means $S_{D_{\bar{x}}}$ = the standard error of the difference between the two means.

No z score approached the 5 percent level of significance. Therefore we fail to reject the null hypotheses (H_o: $M_1 - M_2 = 0$) for all differences in means for this study.

Using an analysis of variance in examining a number of possible relationships between reading levels and the Maryland Parent Attitude Survey, the Tennessee Self Concept Scale and the Piers-Harris Children's Concept Scale, the investigations found only two statistically significant relationships. These were "Disciplinarian" from the Maryland Parent Attitude Survey which was significant at the .05 level. Both reflected negative relationships. Apparently there is something to the idea that family relationships and self concept enter into the picture of reading disability, but at this point their role is very unclear. The results of this investigation cause the authors to question very seriously whether the instruments under study in this investigation are refined enough to be helpful in reading clinics. Certainly they should be used with extreme caution, if at all, in counseling with parents and teachers about a child's reading problem.

Soares and Soares (1973) have identified sixteen major problems the practitioner or researcher faces in trying to measure self concept. Because of the apparent importance of the phenomenon of self concept

and in spite of the limitation Soares and Soares (1973, p. 10) indicate that the search should continue for ". . .more systematic and real trait categories, for more efficient formats for measuring those traits, and for less restricted application of more valid results." The present authors agree.

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